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Items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda*

High-level ministerial segment

Ministerial dialogue with heads of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Main issues for consideration at the high-level ministerial segment

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its resolution 1/1, entitled "Multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for 2001-2005", the Forum recognized that clear strategic direction and strong political commitment to sustainable forest management are key to the successful fulfilment of every aspect of its mandate.[1]

2. The Forum also decided that, inter alia, an important focus of its first high-level ministerial segment would be to endorse the plan of action adopted in its resolution 1/2[2] as a contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, through the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Summit. It also noted that the first ministerial segment of the Forum would provide an opportunity for countries to declare their commitment to country goals and strategies for implementing the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/ Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF).

3. As part of the multi-year programme of work of the Forum, at its second session the Forum will focus on the following elements: (a) combating deforestation and forest degradation; (b) forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems; (c) rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover; (d) rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests; and (e) concepts, terminology and definitions. In addition, means of implementation, finance, transfer of environmentally sound technology and capacity-building will be addressed in the context of the elements noted above. The Forum will also consider the common items that are to be addressed at each session: multi-stakeholder dialogue; enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination,

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inter alia, with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; country experience and lessons learned; emerging issues relevant to country implementation; intersessional work; monitoring, assessment and reporting; promoting public participation; national forest programmes; trade; and enabling environment.

4. As part of the high-level segment, a ministerial dialogue with heads of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests will be held. Taking into careful consideration the views of the Bureau of the Forum at its second session and member organizations of the Partnership, it is proposed that the ministerial dialogue focus on the following five critical issues:

- Repositioning of forests on the national and international political agenda by linking forests to economic and human development and poverty eradication;
- Financing for sustainable forest management;
- Cross-sectoral harmonization at the national, regional and global levels, including fostering synergies between forest-related instruments and organizations;
- Conservation, protection and use of forests;
- Role and commitment of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

5. It is also proposed that the ministerial dialogue highlight aspects of law enforcement and good governance in the context of the five critical issues mentioned above.

6. Those issues may continue to be considered during the session for deliberations among ministers; the deliberations are also expected to provide political commitments to the United Nations Forum on Forests process by endorsing its plan of action, as well as a decision on a ministerial message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and commitments for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including encouragement to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support the activities of the Forum.

7. In the ministerial message to the Summit, ministers may wish to consider the repositioning of forests on the international political and policy agenda by highlighting the role of forests in sustainable livelihoods, poverty eradication and economic and human development; the significant progress achieved in the development and implementation of international forest policy since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; forests as a success story to be showcased at the Summit; the need to strengthen political commitment and international cooperation in implementing agreed policies, notably the IPF/IFF proposals for action; the need to rehabilitate and restore degraded forests; and the need to resolve outstanding issues on forests.

8. Ministers may wish to consider that a major challenge ahead is to secure political support for the United Nations Forum on Forests process and for initiatives for action to implement Forum activities. In that regard, they may wish to provide concrete guidance to all Governments, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other forest-related international organizations and instruments and major groups, with the aim of further promoting dialogue, strengthening commitments and enhancing partnerships in connection with implementation of all Forum activities. In particular, ministers may wish to state that commitments and actions related to forests should take into account the IPF/IFF proposals for action, the implementation of the plan of action of the Forum and the outcomes and decisions of the three ad hoc expert groups that are to be convened to address the issues of: (a) approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting; (b) the finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and (c) consideration, with a view to recommending, of the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

9. It should also be noted that the next high-level ministerial segment will take place at the fifth session of the Forum, at which time the Forum will undertake: (a) a review of progress and consideration of future actions; (b) consideration, with a view to recommending to the Economic and Social Council and through it to the General Assembly, of the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests; and (c) a review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests established in accordance with Council resolution 2000/35. Ministers may wish to provide guidance in that regard.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 22* (E/2001/42/Rev.1), part two, chap. I, sect. B, resolution 1/1, sect. C.

[2] Ibid., resolution 1/2, annex.